Highlights of Agricultural Sector's Plan

323. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the highlights of Agricultural Sector's plan for 1997-98;

(b) whether financial allocations are adequate to meet the various targets; and

(c) if not what is the Government's thinking to meet this shortfall?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) The Agricultural Sector's plan for 1997-98 lays emphasis on improving productivity and production of foodgrains and other commercial crops, primarily through specific crop-oriented programmes and developing areas of untapped potential in the Eastern and North Eastern States and as also rainfed areas, promoting balanced use of fertilizers, proper seed planning and distribution, promoting Integrated Pest Management, revitalising and strengthening of cooperatives for providing credit, inputs and infrastructural support to the farmers, promotion of horticulture crops and fisheries.

(b) and (c) An outlay of Rs. 1519 crores has been provided for the Annual Plan 1997-98 of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. This is less than he outlay proposed by the Department for 1997-98. An effort will be made to achieve the various objectives through optimum utilisation of the financial allocations. The position will be reviewed at the time of formulation of revised estimates for 1997-98.

News item Captioned "Ministry Allays Fear over Exotic weeds in Australia Wheat"

324. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to a news item entitled "Ministry allays fear over exotic weeds in Australian wheat" which appeared in 'Economic Times' dated 20th May, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry has taken up this issue with the supplier; and

(d) if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Technical requirements as per the provisions of Plants, Fruits and Seeds (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 1989 in respect of freedom of imported wheat from notified Plant Quarantine objects had been met in the imported wheat and fully ansured by the Plant Quyarantine officers before recommending release of imported wheat from Australia. Stringent Plant Quarantine measures taken during inspection of imported wheat had revealed the prasance of a few weed seeds. In order to ensure, weed seeds do not get established in our soil, Department of Food Procurement and Distribution, Ministry of Food was broadly advised as under:—

(1) Imported wheat should be distributed in non-wheat growing areas.

(2) The imported wheat should not be moved to any of the wheat growing areas in the North.

(c) and (d) The Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the Sabha.

Subsidy on seeds supplied to the Farmers

325. SHRI RAMADAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are providing or propose to provide subsidy on seeds supplied to the farmers to raise the agricultural production;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise, particularly in Rajasthan and Orissa; and